

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 remain for further consideration. No new matter has been added.

The objections and rejections shall be taken up in the order presented in the Official Action.

2-3. Claims 1-3, 5-10 and 12-20 currently stand rejected for allegedly being obvious in view of the combined subject matter disclosed in U.S. Patent 6,025,654 to Roppel (hereinafter "Roppel"), U.S. Patent 6,058,288 to Reed (hereinafter "Reed"), U.S. Patent 5,808,660 to Sekine et al. (hereinafter "Sekine"), U.S. Patent 5,596,647 to Wakai et al. (hereinafter "Wakai"), U.S. Patent 5,121,205 to Ng et al. (hereinafter "Ng") and U.S. Patent 6,097,435 to Stanger et al. (hereinafter "Stanger").

CLAIM 1

Claim 1 recites a local network in a vehicle with several subscribers distributed over the vehicle, which form data sources and data sinks and which are connected with one another by a data line to transmit audio, video and control data. At least one data source is present for audio and video data and at least one data sink being present for the audio and video data transmitted over the data line. The at least one data source comprises "*a bit stream decoder to decode the compressed audio data;*" (cl. 1). The Official Action contend that the claimed bit stream decoder reads on the opto-electrical converter 14 illustrated in FIG. 2 of Roppel. It is respectfully submitted that the claimed invention as a whole is not being considered. Specifically, the Examiner is not giving the proper technical definition to the claimed bit stream decoder. The specification states "*[t]he unchanged, compressed audio data, which are present*

in a DVD disk 3, for example in accordance with the Dolby digital compression process, are decoded by a bit stream decoder 11. The bit stream decoder 11 is preferably constructed as a Dolby digital decoder, and converts the compressed audio signals into uncompressed PCM signals, which make possible Surround Sound (5 + 1 channels). The uncompressed audio data are then conducted to an audio buffer 8." (emphasis added, clean copy of amended specification, pg. 25, lines 1-5). Thus it is clear from the express claim language itself, and also the specification, that the bit stream **decoder** is a device that decodes compressed audio data. An opto-coupler is a not a decoder. An opto-coupler is a device that uses a short optical transmission path to transfer a signal between elements of a circuit, typically a transmitter and a receiver, while keeping them electrically isolated - since the signal goes from an electrical signal to an optical signal back to an electrical signal, electrical contact along the path is broken. As illustrated in FIG. 2 of Roppel, the opto-electrical converter 14 element of an optocoupler merely converts the received optical signal at the input 11 to an electrical signal – it does not decode a bit stream of audio data in preparation for the decoded audio data being made available on a data line (see the FIGURE of the application). Again, the claim as a whole must be considered.

In addition, in the claimed data source the bit steam decoder is device that is used to prepare data for transmission onto the data line. That is, as recited in claim 1 the bit stream decoder decodes the compressed audio data which is then buffered by the audio buffer and provided to the bus interface, which forms component bit groups for transmission onto the data line. In contrast, the opto-electrical converter 14 disclosed in Roppel is device configured to receive data from the data line 3. Therefore, the motis-operandi of the bit stream decoder in claim 1 is entirely different than the opto-electrical converter 14 of Roppel.

For at least the foregoing reasons it is respectively submitted that a prima facie case of obviousness has not been established. In addition, even if the prior art references could be

properly combined, the resultant combination would still fail to suggest a bit stream decoder as recited in claim 1.

CLAIMS 13 AND 19

Since the Examiner is relying upon the same prior art rejection to reject these claims as claim 1, it is respectfully submitted that claims 13 and 19 are patentable for at least the same reasons as claim 1.

4. Claim 4 currently stands rejected for allegedly being obvious in view of Roppel, Reed, Sekine, Wakai, Ng, Stanger and U.S. Published Application 2001/0014207 to Kawamura (hereinafter "Kawamura").

It is respectfully submitted that this rejection is now moot since claim 1 is patentable for at least the reasons set forth above.

5. Claim 11 currently stands rejected for allegedly being obvious in view of Roppel, Reed, Sekine, Wakai, Ng, Stanger and U.S. Patent 5,898,695 to Fujii (hereinafter "Fujii").

It is respectfully submitted that this rejection is now moot since claim 1 is patentable for at least the reasons set forth above.

For all the foregoing reasons, reconsideration and allowance of claims 1-20 is respectfully requested.

If a telephone interview could assist in the prosecution of this application, please call the undersigned attorney.

Respectfully submitted,



Patrick J. O'Shea
Reg. No. 35,305
O'Shea Getz P.C.
1500 Main Street, Suite 912
Springfield, MA 01115
(413) 731-3100, Ext. 102